

Commissioner Florio's Discussion Points: Telecommunications Guiding Principles California Public Utilities Commission

The California Public Utilities Commission is responsible for the state-level oversight of telecommunications services. These draft guiding principles are intended to provide a basis for discussions between the Commission and other relevant stakeholders¹ for the creation of a Telecommunications Action Plan. Such an Action Plan will assist the Commission in meeting our statutorily defined responsibilities to ensure that all Californians have access to safe, reliable telecommunications services at reasonable prices.

Commission Policy Goals

The Commission's telecommunications policy goals are based on the authority provided to the Commission under state law² and as delegated by Federal law, and include public safety, consumer protection, consumer choice, universal service, interconnection, the conferral of operating licenses,³ and network reliability.

The following guiding principles provide technologically neutral direction for achieving the Commission's policy goals within the context of the Commission's constitutional and statutory jurisdiction:

- 1. Ensure safe, reliable, adequate, and resilient access to California's telecommunications infrastructure and services at reasonable prices.**
- 2. Enhance access to and deployment of advanced telecommunications capabilities and services on a reasonable and timely basis.**
- 3. Protect consumers from fraud, waste, and abuse of market position.**
- 4. Serve as an independent source of data collection and analysis for policy-makers at both State and Federal levels.**
- 5. Support public safety through reliable access to emergency services.**
- 6. Support an environment where multiple carriers may offer, and consumers may choose among, a variety of communication technologies, providers, and services that meet consumers' individual needs.**
- 7. Engage in evidence-based decision-making consistent with state law, Federal regulations and the Constitution.**

¹ Such stakeholders include, but may not be limited to, other state and Federal regulatory agencies, providers of emergency services, telecommunications carriers, and consumers and consumer representatives.

² Sources of the Commission's authority to regulate telephone corporations include, but are not limited to, Public Utilities Code Sections 1001, 451, 816-830, and 851.

³ For instance, the evaluation of applications for Certificates of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCNs) and the enforcement of their terms and obligations once issued.

These principles are intended to be broad enough to remain relevant as innovation and technological changes modify the telecommunications market, but should be revisited periodically to ensure consistency between state law and Commission policy.

Next Steps:

- Commission staff shall establish a team led by Communications Division and comprised of representatives from Legal Division, the Policy and Planning Division, the Commissioners' offices, and other Commission staff if appropriate, to develop a draft Action Plan for communications.
- The team shall convene an En Banc for Commissioners, staff, and the public and to discuss and provide feedback to the team on the guiding principles and how they should be applied within the context of Commission proceedings and programs.
- Based on discussion at the En Banc, the team shall prepare and submit to the Commission for formal consideration a draft Action Plan for applying the guiding principles in the context of Commission proceedings and programs.
- Each item in the Action Plan should satisfy a particular policy goal as contained in California statute and as delegated by Federal law.